AHL-E-BAIT AND CALIPHATE

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

THREE FUNDAMENTAL MATTERS

Considering that one of the matters repeatedly discussed in Nahjul-Balagha is the matter of Ahl-e-bait and Caliphate, it is necessary to take up this discussion - which is related to the special topic of Caliphate after the Holy Prophet and the exclusive position of Ahl-e-bait among the people.

The ideas, which have been set forth in this regard, consist of the following:

(a) The distinguished and extra-ordinary position of Ahl-e-bait and the fact that their knowledge and gnosis originates from an exceptional source and that they cannot be compared with others.

(b) Preference and priority of Ahl-e-bait especially Amir-ul-Momineen's (A.S.) right to the seat of Caliphate either by decree of will or by decree of kinship.

(c) Criticism of the Caliphs.

(d) The philosophy behind Ali's forbearance and tolerance with regard to his definite right and its limits wherein Ali has neither exceeded those limits nor fell short of them.

THE DISTINGUISHED POSITION OF AHL-E-BAIT

«موضع سره و لجا امره و عيبة علمه و موئل حكمه، و كهوف كتبه، و جبال دينه: م اقام انحناء ظهره و اذهب ارتعاد فرائضه... لا يقاس بآل محمد صلي اللّه عليه و آله من هذه الامة احد و لا يسوي م من جرت نعمتهم عليه ابدا، هم اساس الدين و عماه اليقين، اليهم يفيء الغالي و م يلحق التالي و لهم خصائص حق الولاية و فيهم الوصية و الوراثة، الان اذرجع الحق الي اهله و نقل الي منتقله»

"They are the trustees of His secrets, shelter for His affairs, source of knowledge about Him, center of His wisdom, valleys for His books and mountains of His religion. With them, Allah straightened the bend of religion's back and removed the trembling of its limbs... None from the Ummah(in the Islamic community)can be taken at par with the progeny(Ahl) of Muhammad." [1]

Those who were under their obligation cannot be put on the same scale with them. They are the pillars of religion and the foundation of Belief. The fast-pacers have to turn back to them and the slow-pacers have to strive to reach them. They possess the chief characteristics for the vicegerency. The Holy Prophet has laid emphasis on them and they have inherited the prophetic perfection. This is the time when the right has returned to its owner and been diverted to its center of return."

That which can be understood in these few sentences is the extraordinary spirituality which Ahl-e-bait enjoy as a result of which it places them at a level far above the commonplace. At such a level, nobody is prone to being compared to them. Just as in the case of Prophethood, it is wrong to uphold a comparison of other people to the Prophet; similarly in the affair of Caliphate and Imamat, with the existence of personalities at this level, it is useless to speak of others.

« نحن شجرة النبوة و مخبط الرسالة و مختلف الملائكة و معادن العلم و ينابيع الحكم»

We are the tree of Prophethood; the place of descent of Messengership; the place of frequentation of Angels; the extract of knowledge and the fountainhead of wisdom.[2]

«اين الذين زعموا ا م الراسخون في العلم دوننا، كذبنا و بغيا علينا ان رفعنا الله و وضعهم و اعطانا و حرمهم و ادخلنا و اخرجهم بنا يستعطي و يستجلي العمي. ان الائمة من قريش غرسوا في هذا البطن من هاشم لا تصلح علي سواهم و لا تصلح الولاة من غيرهم»

Where are those who have falsely and unjustly claimed that they are deeply versed in knowledge (which has come down in Qur'an as **«الراسخون في العلم »** as against us, although Allah raised us in position and kept them down, bestowed

1-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 2
2-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 107

upon us knowledge but deprived them and entered us (in the fortress of knowledge) but kept them out. It is only through us that guidance is to be sought and blindness (of misguidance) is to be changed into brightness. The Imams are from Ouraish but not from all Quraish; rather they are from one family of Bani-Hashim. The robe of Imamat would not suit others nor would others be suitable as heads of affairs.[3]

« نحن الشعار و الاصحاب و الخزنة والابواب لا توتي البيوت الامن فمن اتاها من غير ابوا ا سمي سارقها»

"We are the near ones, true helpers, and the guardians of religion and the door of entry into Islam. Houses are not entered save through their doors. It is only the thieves who enter from other than the door.[4]

«فيهم كرائم القران و هم كنوز الرحمن، ان نطقوا صدقوا و ان صمتوا لم يسبقوا»

The delicacies of Qur'an are about them (i.e. the descendants of the Prophet) and they are the treasures of Allah, the Compassionate. When they speak, they speak the truth, but when they remain silent no one can speak unless they speak.[5]

هم عيش العلم و موت الجهل، يخبركم حلمهم (حكمهم) عن علمهم، و صمتهم عن حكم منطقهم، لايخالفون الحق و لا يختلفون فيه. هم هعائم الاسلام و ولائج الاعتصام، م عاد الحق في نصابه و انزاح الباطل عن مقامه، و انقطع لسانه عن متنه عقلوا الدين عقل رعاية لا عقل سماع و رواية، فان رواة العلم كثير و رعاته قليل»

"They are life for knowledge and death for ignorance. Their forbearance tells you of their knowledge, and their silence of the wisdom of their speaking. They do not go against right nor do they differ (among themselves) about it. They are the pillars of Islam and asylums of protection. With them right has returned to its position and wrong has left its place and its tongue is severed from its root. They have understood the religion attentively and carefully, not by mere heresy or from relaters. Indeed the relaters of knowledge are many but its understanders are few."[6]

Aside from these aphorisms in Nahjul-Balagha, an incident has been narrated where Kumail-ibn-Ziyad Nakhi says: - "Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) [during the period of Caliphate and his stay in Kufa] caught hold of my hands and together we went towards the graveyard, which was on the outskirts of the city."

As soon as we reached a silent spot in the desert, Ali (A.S.) sighed deeply and

3-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 142
4-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 152
5-Nahjul-Balagha,Sermon No. 152
6-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 236

began to speak.

At the outset of his talk, he said: - “O Kumail the hearts of the sons of Adam are in the rank of vessels. The best vessels are those which protect their contents better. Thus, whatever I say, you record it.”

In this talk which is quite lengthy, Ali (A.S.) divides the people from the viewpoint of pursuance of the true path into three categories? Thereafter he expresses anguish for the reason that he does not find anyone worthy enough to be entrusted the numerous mysteries, which are stored in him. However, in the end of his speech, he says: Of course it is not such that the earth remains entirely devoid of any divine men as per Ali’s aspirations. No. There is always may be a little:

«اللهم بلي لا تخلو الارض من قائم لله بحجة اما ظاهرا مشهورا و اما خائفا مغمورا،لئلاتبطل حجج الله وبنياته. و كم ذا؟ و اين اولئك ؟ اولئك و الله الاقلون عدداً و الاعظمون عند الله قدرا. يخفط الله م حججه و بيناته، حتي يودعوها نظرائهم، و يزرعوها في قلوب اشباههم. هجم م العلم علي حقيقة البصيرة، و باشروا روح اليقين، و استلانوا ما استوعرة المترفون، و انسوا بما استوحش منه الجاهلون و صحبوا الدنيا با بدان ارواحها مهلقة بالمحل الاعلي. اولئك خلفاء الله في ارضه و الدعاة الي دينه، آه آه شوقاً الي رؤيتهم»

“But the earth is never devoid of those who maintain Allah’s plea either openly and reputedly or being afraid as hidden in order that Allah’s pleas and proofs should not be rebutted. How many are they and where are they? By Allah they are few in number, but they are big in esteem before Allah. Through them Allah guards His pleas and proofs till they entrust them to others like them and sow the seeds thereof in the hearts of those who are similar to them. Knowledge has led them to real understanding and so they have associated themselves with the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easy-going regard as hard. They endear what the ignorant took as strange. They lived in this world with their bodies here but their spirits are resting in the high above. They are the vicegerents of Allah on the earth and callers to His religion. How I yearn to see them.”[7]

In these sentences, even though the names of Ahl-e-bait are not mentioned in the form of a hint yet, considering the analogical sentences, which have come down in Nahjul-Balagha regarding he Ahl-bait, it becomes obvious that the sentences are in reference to the Ahl-bait.

From all that we have narrated in this saying from Nahjul-Balagha, it becomes clear that apart from the subject of Caliphate and title of ‘Hujjat’ and the same has been mentioned in an eloquent and audible manner.

7-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 146

PREFERENCE AND PRIORITY

In Nahjul-Balagha this matter has been rationalized on three principles: Firstly, the will and designation of the Holy Prophet, secondly the worthiness of Amir-ul-Mumineen, (A.S.) and the fact that the robe of Caliphate was fitting on him only and lastly the close genealogical and spiritual relation which Hazrat had with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.).

WILL AND DESIGNATION

Some reckon that the matter of designation has not been mentioned in Nahjul-Balagha at all and what is referred to is only the matter of competency and worthiness. Such reckoning Is incorrect because first of all, lust as it was mentioned in the previous chapter, in Sermon No.2 Ali (A.S.) very explicitly says about Ahl-bait as such: **و فيهم الوصيلة و الوراثة** i.e. the will and inheritance of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) is in them.

Secondly, Ali (A.S.) on many occasions has spoken about his right in such manner that one cannot explain them save by the mailer of appointment and clarification of his right to the seat of Caliphate by means of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) In those talks, Ali (A.S.) does not wish to say that why they have kept him aside and appointed others in spite of comprehensiveness of the conditions. By his talks ft is meant that they have robbed his certain and definite right. It is evident that it is only by designation and previous appointment by the Holy Prophet that one can speak of certain and definite right. Competency and worthiness establishes potential right and not actual right and in the case of potential right it is wrong to speak of snatching away of certain and decisive right.

Now we shall mention some instances where Ali (A.S.) reckons the Caliphate to be his just right. For example it has come down in sermon No.6 that in the beginning of his Caliphate when he became aware of the revolt of Ayesha, Thalha and Zubair thereby deciding to defeat them, he said (after mentioning a few points on the current state of affairs) as such:-

«فو الله ما زلت مدفوعا عن حقي مستأثرا علي منذقبض الله نبيه (ص) حتي يوم الناس هذا»

"By Allah I have been continually deprived of my right from the day the Prophet Passed away until today."

In Sermon No.170 which is in effect not a sermon and it would have been better if Sayed Razi (may Allah raise his position) brought it under the section of maxims of Ali (A.S.), he narrates an incident which is as follows: In the presence of some people, a person approached me and said: "O son of Abu - Talib! You are greedy of Caliphate."

I replied:

«بل انتم و الله احرص و ابعد و انا اخص و اقرب، و انما طلبت حقاً لي تحولون بيني و بينه و تضربون

وجهي دونه، فلما قرعته بالحجة في الملاء الحاضرين هب لا بدري ما يجيبني به»

"Rather you are, by Allah, greedier although more remote while I am more suited as well as nearer. I have demanded it as my rights while you are creating an obstacle between me and it and you are turning my face from it. Is the one who seeks his just right more greedy or the one who sets his eyes on others' right. When I knocked at his ears with reasoning he was stunned not knowing what reply to give me about it.

The identity of the person making such an objection and the period when this objection had been made is unknown.

Ibn-Abil-Hadeed says: - The person who objected was Sa'ad Waqqas and it was on the day of "Shu'ara" (Assembly). Thereafter he says: However the Imamiah believe that the person who objected was Abu Obeida and it was on the day of Saqifa.

Following these sentences, it has come down as such:

«اللهم اني استعديك علي قريش و من اعا م فا م قطعوا رحمي و صغروا عظيم م لتي و اجمعوا علي منازعتي امرا هولي»

"My Allah, I seek Thy soccour against the Quraish and those who are assisting them because they have denied me (the rights of) kinship, have lowered my high position and are united in opposing me on the subject (of Caliphate), which is my right."

Below these sentences, lbn-Abil Hadeed says:- "Sentences like the above sentences of Ali based upon grievance against others and the fact that he has been unjustly deprived of his certain right has been narrated to the extent of successive transmission and is in conformity to the views of Imamiah who say that Ali has been appointed by indisputable designation and nobody had any right to take the seat of Caliphate under any circumstances.

Ibn Abil Hadeed himself is the supporter of Ali's superiority and Excellency. According to him, inasmuch as the sentences of Nahiul Balagha imparts the purport of 'Imam's' priority it is needless to explain it. However the above sentence according to him needs to be justified since it has been stipulated that the Caliphate has been the special right of Ali (A.S.) and this cannot be conceived but by appointment and the fact that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) has fixed the responsibility and clarified the right on behalf of God.

One of the companions of Ali (A.S.) belonging to the tribe of Bani-Asad asked Ali (A.S.) as such:

« كيف دفعكم قومكم عن هذا المقام و انتم احق به»

"How is it that your people have deprived you from Caliphate whereas you were most worthy of it?"

Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) responded to this question and his reply is the same as what has come down in Sermon No 160 in Nahjul Balagha. Ali (A.S.) explicitly states that greed and avarice on the one hand and negligence (as per

the interest of the people) on the other hand were the only factors leading to such a situation.

«فا ا كانت اثرة شحت عليها نفوس و سخت عنها نفوس آخرين»

This questioning and answering took place during Ali’s Caliphate exactly when he was involved (in opposition) with Muawiya and his tricks. Amir-ul-Mumineen (A.S.) disliked discussion of this matter under such circumstances. So, before replying, he told him in a reprovable manner that every question has its own appropriate place and time and that it was not proper to discuss the past at that moment. He told him that the problem of that day actually rested with Muawiya.

و هلم الخطب في ابن ابي سفيان......

Anyhow, just as it was his usual temperate method, he did not refrain from answering and clarifying the past realities. In the Sermon of Shiqshiqayya, he explicitly says:

« اري تراثي بأ»

I witnessed the plundering of my inheritance. It is obvious that by inheritance he did not mean family or kinship inheritance but spiritual and divine one.

VIRTUE AND SUPERIORITY

The Second issue after the subject of distinct designation and definite right is the subject of virtue and superiority. This mailer too has repeatedly been mentioned in Nahjul Balagha. In the Sermon of Shiqshiqayya, Ali (A.S.) says:-

« و اما و الله لقد تقمصها ابن ابي قحافة و انه ليعلم ان محلي منها القطب من الرحي ينحدر عني السيل و لا يرقي الي الطير»

"By Allah the son of Abu Qahafa (Abu Bakr) dressed himself with it (the Caliphate) while he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was the same as the position of the axis in relation to the hand-mill. The flood water (of knowledge and virtue) flows down from me and the royal falcon (human thought) cannot fly as near as me."

In Sermon No.195, he first recalls the level of his submission and faith towards the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and then rememorates his scarifies and helps in various instances. Thereafter, he narrates the incident of the demise of the Holy Prophet at the time when his head lay rested on his chest and then mentions the event of giving 'Ghusl' (Ablution) to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) with his own hands while the angels were assisting him in this work and he could listen to their humming voices and perceive the manner in which a group amongst them would come and another group amongst them would depart while sending salutations upon the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.). And right until the last moment of the Holy Prophet's burial, the murmuring of the angels did not cease reaching Ali's ears.

After recalling his various special positions -the position of his submission and belief, (contrary to some of the other companions) his unequalled sacrifices, his relationship with the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) and the fact that the Holy Prophet breathed his last on his very lap, he says:

فمن ذا أحق به مني حياً و ميتاً

"Thus who can have greater rights with him than I, during his life or after his death?"

RELATIONSHIP AND LINEAGE

Just as we are aware, moments after the Holy Prophet's demise, Sa'ad-ibn-Ebadah Ansari claimed the Caliphate and a group amongst his tribe gathered around him. Sa'ad and his followers chose the place of Saqeefa for this very purpose. However Abu Bakr, Omar and Abu Ubaida Jarrah reached there and prevented the people from falling for Sa'ad-ibn-Ebadah's plot and instead took allegiance from the people in Abu Bakr's favor. In this assembly, words were exchanged between Muhajirs and Ansars and various factors played their role in determining the ultimate fate of this gathering.

One of the so-called winning cards, which the Muhajirs and the supporters of Abu Bakr played, was that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.A.) was from Quraish and that they themselves belonged to the Holy Prophet's clan. Below the commentary of Sermon No.65, Ibn Abil-
Hadeed says:

Omar addressed the Ansars: "The Arabs will never agree to have you as the head of the state since the Prophet was not from amongst you. Certainly the Arabs will not oppose if the Caliphate is allowed to one in whose house rests the Prophethood.... Who can oppose us in connection with rulership and inheritance of Muhammad whereas we are his ones and his relatives?"

Again, just as we are aware, during that very moment, Ali (A.S.) was fulfilling his personal responsibility of burying the Holy Prophet's body. After the termination of this event, Ali (A.S.) enquired from those present in that gathering about the reasoning put forth by both the opposite groups and after listening to them he criticized and rejected the reasoning of both the groups. In this connection, the sayings of Ali (A.S.) are the same which Sayed Razi has brought In Sermon No.65.

Ali (A.S.) asked: "What did the Ansars say?" They replied: "There should be one chief from us and one from amongst you." Amir-ul-Mumineen said: "Why did you not argue that the Prophet (S.A.W.A.) had left his will that whoever is good amongst the Ansars should be treated well and whoever is bad he should be forgiven!"

The people said: "What is there against them in it?"

Amir-ul-Mumineen said: "If the government was from them there should have been no will in their favor."

Then he said: "What did the Quraish plead?" The people said: "They argued that they belong to the lineal tree of the Prophet." Then Amir-ul-Mumineen said:-

احتجوا بالشجرة و اضاعوا الثمرة

"They argued with the tree but spoiled the fruits."

In other words, if the tree indicates true relationship where others are the branches of that tree and the Prophet is one of those branches, then Ahl-e-bayt of the Prophet are the fruits of those branches.

In Sermon No.160 a part of which was narrated before, there is a repertoire of questioning and answering between one Asadi man and Ali (A.S.) wherein the latter argues in connection with the matter of relationship too. His expression is as such:

« اما الاستبداد علينا ذا المقام و نحن الاعلون نسباً والاشدون برسول الله(ص) نوطاً»

The reasoning of relationship set forth by Ali (A.S.) is a kind of logical dispute. Taking into account the tact that others had fixed the matter of genealogical relationship as the main argument and proof, Ali (A.S.) would say:

"Leaving aside all other matters like designation, virtue and worthiness, if we take into consideration the same lineage and relationship which others wish to rely on, I would still be more worthy than the other claimants to the seat of Caliphate."

CRITICISM AGAINST THE CALIPHS

The third point with regards to this mailer is the matter of criticism against the Caliphs. Criticism by Ali (A.S.) against them is an indisputable fact and the method adopted by Hazrat in this regard is highly instructive, Ali's criticisms against the Caliphs is not emotional nor prejudiced but analytical and logical and it is for this reason that great importance is attached to the criticisms of Hazrat. If criticisms are based on emotions and the outburst of annoyance, it takes a particular shape and if they are logical and based on true judgement in the realities, it takes another shape. The emotional criticisms are usually the same for every human being because it is due to a series of curses and taunts that it is offered. Vilification and curse in such a case has no foundation.

But the logical criticisms are based on the moral and spiritual qualities and depend on special historical features of a person's life and as such, they cannot be the same for all the individuals. It is due to this that the value of degree of a criticizer's realism becomes evident.

Some of the criticisms leveled against the Caliphs in Nahjul-Balagha are general and implicit while others are partial and explicit. The general and implicit criticisms are those very ones which Ali (A.S.) categorically expresses about his clear and definite right being snatched away from him.

Ibn Abil Hadeed says:

"Complain and criticism by Imam against the Caliphs is **متواتر** (widely transmitted) even if they are in the form of general and implicit criticism. Once Imam heard an oppressed person crying out- "I have been oppressed and Injustice imposed on me." Ali (A.S.) replied to him- (come let the depressed hearts gather together) Let us cry out together because I too have been put to oppression persistently."

Moreover, he narrates from one of his trusted contemporaries famous by the name of Ibn A'alia who said:

"I was in the presence of Ismail bin Ali Hanbali, the Imam of Hanbalites. At that moment he inquired from a traveler who had returned from his journey to Kufa about his journey and all that he had seen in Kufa. While narrating the events, he expressed with deep regret the incident of severe criticism by the Shias on the day of Ghadeer against the Caliphs." The Hanbali 'Faqih' said:

What is the fault of those people? Ali has himself opened this door. The traveler replied: Then what is our duty in these circumstances?

Should we consider these criticisms as true and correct or false and wrong? If we consider them as correct, we have to leave one side and if we consider them to be incorrect, we have to leave the other side!

When Ismail heard this question he moved from his place and dispersed the gathering. The only thing, which he said was that this, was a question, which he too had not found its reply until then.

* * *

ABU BAKR

Criticism of Abu Bakr has come in an explicit form in the Sermon of Shiqshiqiyya and has been concluded in two sentences.

Firstly that: “He was very well aware that I am more worthy than him and Caliphate is a garb which fits properly on me only. In spite of knowing this fact why did he do such a thing? During the period of Caliphate, I was similar to a person having a thorn in his eyes or a bone stuck up in his throat.

« اما وا..... لقد تقمصها ابن ابي فحافة و انه ليعلم ان محلي منها محل القطب من الرحي»

I swear by God that the son of Abu Bakr wore the garb of Caliphate while he knew that the pivot of this grinding stone is none other than me.

Secondly: why did he select the next Caliph after him especially that once during his period of Caliphate he asked the people to cancel the agreement of allegiance and release him from this commitment. When one is having doubt in his own ability in this affair and asks the people to accept his resignation then on what basis does he appoint the next Caliph?

« فواعجبا بيناهو يستقيلها في حياته اذعقدها لاخر بعد وفاته»

“How surprising that Abu Bakr asks the people during his life-time to free him from the charge of Caliphate and at the same time prepares the ground for the other to become the Caliph after his death.”

After mentioning the above sentence, Ali (A.S.) uses the most severe words against the two Caliphs thus laying bare the root of their connection with one another. He says:

«لشد ما تشطرا ضرعيها»

“Together they shared its udders strictly among themselves.

About the matter of Abu Bakr’s resignation, Ibn Abil Hadeed says that two versions exist about the sentences once uttered by Abu Bakr on top of the pulpit during the period of his Caliphate. Some narrate that Abu Bakr said:

وليتكم و لست بخيركم

I.e. the responsibility of Caliphate has been put on me while I am not the best among you.

However most narrate that he said:

افيلونيفلست بخيركم

i.e. “You excuse me for I am not the best among you.”

The sentences of Nahjul-Balagha approve that the sentence of Abu Bakr was presented in its second form.

OMAR

Criticisms against Omar in Nahiul-Balagha have taken shape in another form. Apart from the joint criticisms leveled against him and Abu Bakr by use of the sentence «لشد ما تشطرا ضرعيها» a series of criticisms have been leveled against him taking into consideration his moral and spiritual characteristics. Ali (A.S.) has criticized two moral qualities of Omar:

Firstly, his harsh and rude behavior - In this regard, he was just the opposite of Abu Bakr. Morally speaking, Omar was rough, harsh4empered, disgusting and fearful.

Ibn Abil Hadeed says:

"The distinguished companions refrained from meeting Omar. Ibn Abbass expressed his opinion about the matter of «عول» after Omar's death. He was asked as to why he didn't disclose his opinion before and he replied: "Due to tear of Omar."

«درة عمر» (Derr'a of Omar) i.e. his whip had become a proverb for his awfulness such that afterwards it was said:

«درة عمر اهيب من سيف حجاج»

I.e. the whip of Omar was more terrifying than the sword of Hajjaj.

Omar's rudeness was more towards the women and hence they were fearful of him. At the time of Abu Bakr's death, when the women from his household members were lamenting over his death, Omar was persistently forbidding them from such an act. However the women continued their lamentation and crying. Finally Omar dragged out Um Farwa, sister of Abu Bakr from among the women and lashed her with his whip. After this incident, the women dispersed.

Another moral quality of Omar which has come under criticism in the saying of Ali (A.S.) is the matter of making haste in judgment and then turning back from the same judgment i.e. his self-contradiction. Repeatedly, he would pass judgments and later on when he would realize his mistakes, he would confess to them.

Many instances have been narrated in this regard. For example Omar has himself said:

كلكم افقه من عمر حتي ربات الحجال

"All of you, even the gods of Hijla are more expert (in jurisprudence) than me."

Similarly the sentence: لو لا علي لهلك عمر

"If Ali had not been there, Omar would have perished." It is said that this sentence was heard from him over 70 times. It was in connection to these very mistakes that Ali (A.S.) used to correct him.

Amirul-Momineen Ali (A.S.) has reproached Omar on these two very qualities, which have been strictly approved by history i.e. his severe harshness

such that his companions were fearful of expressing the truth and secondly his haste and repeated mistakes and consequently his apologies in wrong decision making.

About the first matter Ali (A.S.) says:

« فصيرها في حوزة خشناء يغلظ كلمها و يخشن مسها.....فصاحبها كراكب الصعبة ان اسنق لها خرم و ان اسلس لها تقحم»

"Abu Bakr put the Caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was haughty and the touch was rough.... One in contact with it was like the rider of an unruly camel. If he pulled up its rein, the very nostril would be slit but if he let it loose he would be knocked over."

About his haste, numerous mistakes and consequently his apologies Ali (A.S.) says:

« ويكثر العثار فيها و الاعتذار منها»

"His mistakes were plenty and also the excuses there from.

Murtaza Mutahari says:-

"As far as I can recollect, the first and second Caliph have been remembered and come under criticism in Nahjul-Balagha in an explicit manner only and only in the Sermon of Shiqshiqiya. In other places, if at all it exists it has either come in a general form or possesses a sarcastic remark like in the famous letter which he writes to Osman bin Hunaif in connection to the matter of Fadak." Or for example in Letter No.62 where he says:-

"It never occurred to me and I never imagined that after the Prophet, the Arabs would snatch away the Caliphate from me. Suddenly, I noticed people gathering around the man for pledging allegiance to him."

Or in Letter No.28 in reply to Muawiya, says: - "You have said that I was dragged like a camel with a nose string for being sworn allegiance.... What humiliation does it mean for a Muslim to be the victim of oppression so long as he does not entertain any doubt in his religion, or any mis-giving in his firm belief?

UTHMAN

Uthman has been mentioned in Nahjul-Balagha more than the previous two Caliphs have. The reason is obvious - In an incident, which history named it as the great conspiracy and the close relatives of Uthman himself i.e. the Bani-Ummayah had a greater hand in it than others, Uthman was killed and the people immediately surrounded Ali (A.S.). Hazrat too willingly or unwillingly accepted their allegiance and this affair naturally created a problem for him during his period of Caliphate. On the one hand, those desirous of the seat of Caliphate accused him of having a hand in the death of Uthman and so, he was bound to defend himself and clarify his position in this matter. On the other hand, there was a revolutionary group, which had revolted against Uthman's rule and was reckoned to be a powerful force and was amongst the followers of Ali (A.S.). The enemies of Ali (A.S.) wanted that Hazrat to force them surrender so that they could be brought to justice for their crime in the killing of Uthman. Hence Ali (A.S.) was supposed to set forth this matter in his speeches and explain his position.

Besides, during the life-time of Uthman, when the revolutionary group had surrounded Uthman and forced him to either mend his ways or else resign, the only one who was trusted by both the sides and who acted as a mediator between them and expressed one side's views to the other (besides his own views) was Ali (A.S.)

Moreover, corruption in Uthman's organization was much more rampant and as his duty, Ali (A.S.) could not remain silent and avoid discussing these matters either during the lifetime of Uthman or the period after him. Collectively, these factors are the reasons for Uthman's name being mentioned more than others in the sayings of Ali (A.S.).

In Nahjul-Balagha, altogether on sixteen occasions, discussion on Uthman have taken place and most of them are related to the matter of his assassination. In five instances, Ali (A.S.) seriously acquits himself from having taken any part in the assassination and in one instance introduces Thalha who made the topic of Uthman's assassination as a pretext for Instigating (the people) against Ali (A.S.) as the one having a hand in the conspiracy against Uthman. On two occasions, he seriously reckons Muawiya to be the guilty one; the same Muawiya who used Uthman's assassination as a pretext for plotting and disrupting the moral and heavenly Government of Ali (A.S.) and who shed crocodile tears and provoked the helpless people to bring to justice the killers of the innocent Caliph (for his own benefit).

MUAWIVA’S SKILLFULL ROLE IN THE KILLING OF UTHMAN

In his letters to Muawiya Hazrat Ali (A.S.) says: “What more do you wish to say? Your invisible hand, right up to your elbow is of this, you speak of Uthman’s blood!”

This part is extraordinarily wonderful. Ali (A.S.) lifts the curtain over a mystery which (even) the sharp eyes of history has been times that researchers, by seeking help and guidelines from the fundamentals of psychology and sociology have brought out this point from the hidden angles of history. Otherwise, it was extremely difficult for most of the people who lived in the past to believe that Muawiya had had a role in Uthman’s murder or at least had been negligent in defending him.

Muawiya and Uthman were both from Bani Ummayah and had tribal connections. Such strong connections were based on pre-calculated objectives and definite policies, which the historians of today reckon to be similar to party connections of today.

That is to say, it was not the racial or tribal sentiments only, which connected them to one another. The tribial connections were a base for pulling them together to organize and coordinate mutual materialistic goals. Personally too, Muawiya had seen kindness and support from Uthman and was pretentious with his friendship and support. Therefore no one could believe that Muawiya had an inside hand in this affair.

Muawiya who followed only one aim and regarded all possible means to achieve that aim to be permissible never allowed any feelings nor emotions to enter his destructive and inhumane logic, decided that with the death of Uthman he could reap much better benefits than when he was alive and with his blood shed on the ground he could have more power than the blood circulating in his veins. Thus, he prepared the ground for his assassination. Moreover, at that time when he was in perfect control of extending his useful help and able to prevent his assassination, he abandoned him in the days of death.

However, the sharp-sighted eyes of Ali (A.S.) would see the Invisible hands of Muawiya and he was aware of the events occurring behind the curtain. For this reason, he officially introduced Muawiya as the one responsible and answerable for Uthman’s death.

In Nahjul-Balagha we find a lengthy letter which Imam (A.S.) has written in reply to the letter of Muawiya. In his letter, Muawiya accuses Imam (A.S.) to have participated in the assassination of Uthman and Imam (A.S.) replies to him as such:

« ثم ذكرت مل كان من امري وامر عثمان فلك ان تجاب عن هذه لرحمك منه، فاينا كان اعدي له و اهدي الي مقاتله امن بذل له نصرته فاستقعده و استكفه؟ ام من استنصره فتراخي عنه وبث المنون اليه حتي اتي قدره؟....و ما كنت لاعتذر من اني كنت انقم عليه احداثا فان كان الذنب اليه ارشادي و هدايتي له فرب ملوم لا ذنب له و قد يستفيد الظنة المتنصح و ما اردت الا الاصلاح ما استطعت و ما

توفيقي الا بالله عليه توكلت»

"Then you have recalled my position vis-a-vis Umman, and in this matter an answer is due to you because of your kinship with him. So (now tell me), which one of us was more enemical towards Uthman and who did more to bring about his killing; or who offered him his support but he made him sit down and stopped him (from helping); or who was he whom he called for help but turned his face from him and drew his death near until his fate overtook him? Of course, I am not going to offer my excuse for reproving him for (some of) his innovations. If my good counsel and guidance to him was a sin, then I accept it for many an innocent people who are blamed. Verily, sometimes a consoler sees no result from his work but mistrust from the other side. My intention was only to improve matters so far as I could. I do not wish any favour from anyone but Allah and I have trust in Him only."[8]

In another letter addressed to Muawiya he writes:

فاما اكثارك الحجاج في عثمان و قتلته فانك انما نصرت عثمان حيث كان النصر لك و خذلته حيث كان النصرله

"As with regards to your prolonging the matter of Uthman's murder the picture is that you helped Uthman when it was really to your own benefit and you forsook him when it was to his benefit."[9]

Uthman's murder itself gave birth to sedition and opened the door to other sedition in the Islamic world, which has entangled for centuries and its effect still remains. From the collective speeches of Ali (A.S.) in Nahiul-Balagha, it can be inferred that he was a severe critic of Uthman's policies and reckoned the revolutionaries to be rightful in this regard. At the same time, he has not reckoned Uthman's murder committed by the hands of the rebels to be in conformity with the general interests of Islam. Before Umman's assassination, Hazrat Ali (A.S.) was already worried about this matter and was foreseeing its consequences and aftermath's. Whether Uthman's crimes was to such extent that, as per the laws of Shariat, it prompted his eradication a natural consequence and whether the death penalty proposed, more so, by the near ones of Uthman as the only Viable option put forward before the revolutionaries, a just Judgement is one matter and the question of whether Uthman's killing in the seat of Caliphate by the orders of rebels was in the interest of Islam and Muslims or not is another matter.

From the entire speeches of Ali (A.S.), it can be inferred that he wanted Uthman to forsake the path which he was following and choose the true and fair

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8-Nahjul-Balagha Letter No. 28

9-Nahjul-Balagha, letter No.37

Islamic path - And in the event of non-acceptance, the revolutionaries would dismiss and perhaps imprison him and the Caliph who would be worthy of taking over the seat of Caliphate would later on Investigate into Uthman's crimes and pass the necessary judgment. Thus Ali (A.S.) neither issued any orders concerning the killing of Uthman nor did he substantiate him as opposed to the revolutionaries. The entire efforts of Ali (A.S.) was directed in this course that the legitimate demands of the revolutionaries be fulfilled without the need for a drop of blood to be shed or that (at least) Uthman himself repents from his past actions or willingly entrusts the affair to his citizens. Ali (A.S.) judged the two sides as such:

«استأثر فاساء الاثرة و جزعتم فاسأتم الجزع»

"Uthman took the autocratic path. He appropriated everything for himself and his near ones and did so unscrupulously. You (revolutionaries) protested against it and committed excess therein."[10]

At the time when he set forth the demands of the revolutionaries before Uthman (as a mediator) he expressed his apprehension as to the possibility of Uthman getting killed in the seat of Caliphate and the door of Conspiracy thus being opened before the Muslims. He addressed Uthman as such:

و اني انشدك الله الا تكون امام هذه الامة المقتول، فانه كان يقال: يقتلفي هذه الامة امام يفتح عليها القتل و القتال الي يوم القيامة، و يلبس امورها عليها،و يبث الفتن فيها، فلا يبصرون الحق من الباطل، يموجون فيها موجاً؛ و يمرجون فيها مرجاً

"I swear to you by Allah that you should not be that Imam of the people who will be killed because it has been said that. An Imam of this people will be killed after which killing and fighting will be made open for them till the Day of Judgment, and he will confuse their matters and spread troubles over them. As a result, they will not discern truth from falsehood. They will oscillate like waves and would be utterly misled."[11]

Just as previously narrated from Maula (A.S.) himself, during Uthman's lifetime Imam (A.S.) has objected and criticizingly admonished him either in his presence or in his absence. Similarly after his death too, Imam (A.S.) has perpetually reminded the people about his deviations and the fact that he had not followed the principle of:

اذكروا موتاكم بالخير (It is said that this is the saying of Muawiya and has been uttered to the benefit of corrupt governments and personalities until their past records get tainted along with their death so that there remains no lesson for the future generation and there remains no danger for the future corrupt

10-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No.39
11-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No.162

governments). Here are some instances of criticism:

(1) In Sermon No.128 in the sentences which Ali (A.S.) has used at the time of bidding farewell to Abu Zar and that when he was being exiled to Rabza on the orders of Uthman, he has clearly objected and criticized such action and has implicitly introduced the Uthman's government as a corrupt one.

(2) In Sermon No.30 there is a sentence which was already narrated:

استأثر فأساء الاثرة

"He appropriated (wealth) and did it unscrupulously."

(3) Uthman was a feeble-character person and did not possess self-determination or steadfastness. His relatives, especially Marwan Hakam who was once banished by the Holy Prophet and was summoned by Uthman to go to Medina and made his minister, had a strong dominance over him and they did whatever they liked in his name. Ali (A.S.) openly criticized him in this regard and said:

« فلا تكونن لمروان سيقة يسوقك حيث شاء بعد جلال السن و تقضي العمر»

"You should not behave as the carrying beast for Marwan so that he may drag you wherever he likes, despite your seniority of age and length of life."[12]

(4) Ali (A.S.) was a case of suspicion for Uthman. The latter reckoned the presence of Ali (A.S.) in Medina to be deranging and detrimental to him. Ali (A.S.) was thought to be a haven and the source of hope for the insurgents especially that sometimes; the insurgents were shouting slogans in the name of Ali and were openly calling for the dismissal of Uthman and the establishment of Ali's (A.S.) statesmanship.

Thus Uthman wished Ali's non-presence in Medina so that the forces of insurgents would be ineffective due to his absence. However, on the other side he could see with certainty the manner in which Ali (A.S.) was mediating with good-intentions between him and the insurgents and how his presence was a source of peace. Anyhow he asked Ali (A.S.) to leave Medina and go temporarily to his farm in 'Yanabah' which was approximately 12 Km or more from Medina.

But it did not take long before Uthman left uneasy by the vacuum created by Ali's absence and sent a message for him to return to Medina.

Naturally, when Ali (A.S.) returned, the slogans shouted in his favour-gained force and so he was once again asked to leave Medina.

Ibn Abbass had brought Uthman's message requesting Ali (A.S.) to once again leave Medina and proceed towards his farm. Ali (A.S.) became upset by this insulting behavior of Uthman and said:

« يا ابن عباس مايريد عثمان الا ان يجعلني جملا ناضحا بالغرب اقبل و ادبر، بعث الي ان اخرج ثم

12-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No.162

«بعث الي ان اقدم ثم هو الان يبعث الي ان اخرج، و الله لقد دفعت حتي خشيت ان اكون آثما»

"O Ibn Abbas, Umman just wants to treat me like the water-drawing camel so that I go forward and backward with the bucket. Once he sent me word that I should go out, then sent me word that I should come back. Now again he sends me word that I should go. By Allah I continued protecting him till I feared lest I become a sinner."

(5) Most severe than all this is what has come in the Sermon of Shiqshiqiya:

« الي ان قام ثالث القوم نافجا حضنيه بين نثيله و معتلفه م قام معه بنوابيهيخضمون مال الله خضم الابل نبتةالربيع الي ان انتكثعليه فتله واجهز عمله و كبت به بطنته»

"...Till the third man of these people stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his cousins also stood up swallowing up Allah's wealth like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought him down."

In describing this part, Ibn Abil Hadeed says:

"These interpretations are the bitterest interpretations and I think it is even more severe than the famous Hatee'a poem which is said to be the most dispraised poem of the Arabs."

The famous Hatee'a poem is as follows:

دع المكارم لا ترحل لبغيتها
و اقعد فانك انت الطاعم الكاسي

A BITTER SILENCE

The third section on the subject of Caliphate which has been reflected In Nahjul-Balagha is the matter of silence and moderateness of Ali (A.S.) and its philosophy.

By silence is meant the abandonment of a revolt and abstention from carrying the sword in hand. Otherwise, just as we had previously mentioned Ali (A.S.) did not desist from setting forth his claim and complaining at opportune situations the injustice done to him.

Ali (A.S.) remembers this silence as bitter and reckons it to be an affliction and an agony of death:

« و اغضيت علي القذي و شربت علي الشجي و صبرت علي اخذ الكظم و علي امر من العلقم»

“I shut my eyes while there was a thorn in it and drank while there was a bone stuck in my throat. I adopted patience while my throat felt suffocated and something more bitterly than colocynth was put down my palate.

Ali’s silence was logical and a well-calculated one, not merely arising from had to choose between two options; one that was based on expedience and was the most unpleasant and tiring one. It was easy for him to revolt and at the most it would have resulted in martyrdom of him and friends and helpers. Martyrdom was the goal of Ali (A.S.) and incidentally in this very situation he addresses Abu Sufyan in one of his famous sentences as such:

« وا....لابن ابيطالب أنس بالموت من الطفل بثدي امه»

“By Allah the son of Abu Talib is fonder of death than an infant with the breast of its mother.”[13]

By these sentences, Ali (A.S.) had made Abu Sufyan and others understand that his silence was not due to fear from death but rather for the reason that his active revolt and martyrdom in such a situation would have been damaging to Islam (and not to the advantage of Islam).

Ali (A.S.) himself specifies that his silence was a pre-calculated one. He himself says that he selected the path, which was nearer to prudency:

« و طفقت ارتاي بين ان اصول بيد جذاء اواصبر علي طخية عمياء، يهرم فيها الكبير و يشيب فيها الصغير و يكدح فيها مؤمن حتي يلقي ربه، فرايت ان الصبر علي هاتي احجي فصبرت و فب العين قذي و في الحلق شجي»

“Then I began to think whether I should assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations wherein the grown up are feeble and the young grow

13-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No.5

old and the true believer acts under strain till he meets Allah. I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So I adopted patience although there was pricking in the eye and suffocation in the throat.”[14]

14-Nahjul-Balagha. Sermon No.3

ISLAMIC UNITY

Naturally, everybody wishes to know which matter kept Ali (A.S.) in so deep a thought that he did not wish to see any harm come to it and instead attached so much importance that he was prepared to tolerate the agonies and the sufferings?

Roughly it should be said that the important reason was the unity of the Muslims and the non- initiation of discord. The Muslims who were newly displaying their power and strength to the world were indebted to their unity and alliance of their creed (of faith). They acquired their astounding prosperity in the later years from this very unity. It was due to this expediency that Ali (A.S.) as a rule, kept silent and acted moderately.

Is it believable that a pious youth of thirty three years could have been pushed to such corners; and controlled himself to such extent and been so much loyal towards Islam that for the sake of Islam, he chose the path which lead to his own deprivation of rights?

Yes, it is possible to believe. The extraordinary character of Ali (A.S.) became manifest in such a situation. It is not merely a conjecture. Ali (A.S.) has himself rationalized his actions and has, with utmost explicitness, given no reasons for his behavior other than his concern over discord among the Muslims. Especially during the period of his own Caliphate when Talha and Zubair broke their allegiance and started an internal conspiracy, Ali (A.S.) repeatedly compares himself with them (i.e. Talha and Zubair) after the departure of the Holy Prophet and says: “I have overlooked my obvious right for the sake of not causing discord among the Muslims while they (in spite of willingly and voluntarily giving their allegiance) have broken it and have not bothered about the emergence of disunity among the Muslims.

In explaining Sermon No.119, lbn Abil Hadeed narrates from Abdullah-Ibn-Janade who said: “In the initial period of Ali’s Caliphate, I was in Hejaz and I intended to go to Iraq. In Mecca I performed my ‘Umra’ (lesser pilgrimage) and came to Medina. I entered the mosque of the Holy Prophet and saw that people had gathered together for prayers. Ali (A.S.) who had his sword with himself came outs and delivered a sermon. In that sermon, after praising and glorifying God and sending salutation upon the Holy Prophet, he said:

“After the Holy Prophet’s departure, we (the household members of the Prophet) never ever imagined that the Ummah would usurp our right. However, that which could not be imagined did really occur. They usurped our right and we were ranked on par with the low-class people. Tears rolled down from our eyes and problems stood facing us.”

و ايم الله لولا مخافة الفرقة بين المسلمين و ان يعود الكفر و يبور الدين لكنا علي غير ما كنا لهم عليه.

“By Allah if there was no fear of occurrence of discord, the return to blasphemy and destruction of religion among the Muslims, our stand towards

them would have been a different one."

Thereafter, he continued his speech by referring to Talha and Zubair and said: "These two gave their allegiance to me but later broke it. They took Ayes ha along with themselves to Basra so that they could create disunity among you Muslims."

Moreover, Ibn Abil Hadeed narrates from Kalbi that:

"Before going to Basra, Ali (A.S.) in one sermon said: "After the Holy Prophet, the Quraish snatched our right from us and attributed exclusively for themselves."

فرأيت ان الصبر علي ذلك افضل من تفريق كلمة المسلمين و سفك دمائهم و الناس حديثوا عهد بالاسلام و الدين يمخض مخض الوطب يفسده ادني و هن و يعكسه اقل خلق.

"I realized that patience is better than dissipation of the Muslim creed and their bloodshed. I reckoned that the people are newly converted Muslims and the religion like a large leathern water bag, capable of being destroyed by the slightest sluggish move and could be turned upside down by the most insignificant person. Thereafter he said:

How good it would have been if Talha and Zubair had resorted to patience for a year or at least a few months and witnessed my rule and then taken a decision. However, they did not hold out and revolted against me. They entered into a skirmish with me for a matter, which Allah had never set any right for them.

Under the sermon of Shiqshiqiya, Ibn Abil Hadeed says: "Regarding the event of 'Shuara', (consultative council) since Abbass was aware of its result, he suggested Ali (A.S.) not to attend the meeting. Although Ali (A.S.) reckoned Abbass to be right as far as the results were concerned, he still did not accept his suggestion." His reason was as he said:

اني اكره الخلاف من اختلاف

"I do not like discord." Abbass said:

اذا تري ما تكره

"Thus you will encounter what you do not wish."

In Vol. 2 under sermon 65, he narrates as such: "One of the sons of Abu Lahab recited a poem regarding the virtue and the just right of Ali and at the same time vilified his enemies." Ali prohibited him from reciting such poems (which in fact was a kind of provocation and threat to unity) and said:

سلامة الدين احب الينا من غيره

"We reckon the safety of Islam and the continuation of the fundamentals of Islam to be a matter more lovable and valuable than anything else."

More explicit than this is what has come down in Nahjul-Balagha itself. This explicitness can be seen in three different instances in Nahjul- Balagha:

(1) When Abu Sufyan intended to create sedition under the pretext of offering his support to Ali (A.S.), Hazrat replied as such:

« شقوا امواج الفتن بسفن النجاة و عرجوا عن طريق المنافرة وضعوا عن تيجان المفاخرة»

"Steer clear through the waves of mischief by boats of deliverance; turn away from the path of dissension and put off the crowns of pride"[15]

(2) In the Shuara (consultative council) of six people, when Uthman was selected by Abdur-Rahman-ibn-Auf, he (i.e. Ali) said:

« قد علمتم اني احق الناس ا من غيري و والله لا سلمن ما سلمت امور المسلمين و لم يكن فيها جور الا علي خاصة »

"You have certainly known that I am the most rightful of all for the Caliphate. By Allah, so long as the affairs of the Muslims remain intact and there is no oppression in it saves on myself I shall keep quiet."[16]

(3) At the time when Malik Ashtar became the Governor of Egypt, Hazrat (A.S.) wrote a letter to the people of Egypt. (This letter is different from the famous lengthy directions). In this letter he relates the era of the beginning of Islam till he reaches to a point where he says:

فامسكت يدي حتي رايت راجعة الناس قد رجعت عن الاسلام يدعون اليَ محق دين محمد(ص) فخشيت ان لم انصر الاسلام و اهله اري فيه ثلماً او هدماً تكون المصيبة به علي اعظم من فوت و لا يتكم التي انما هي متاع ايام قلائل

"I withheld my authority only as long as I saw that many people were reverting away from Islam and thus damaging the religion of Muhammad. I then feared that if I did not protect Islam and its people, there may occur in ft a breach or demolition that would mean a greater blow to me than the loss of power which was in any case, to last for a while."[17]

15-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No.5
16-Nahjul-Balagha, Sermon No. 72
17- letter No.62

TWO OUTSTANDING STANCES

In his sayings, Ali (A.S.) refers to two distinguished stances on two occasions and reckons his stance in these two instances to be a privileged and limited one. That Is to say, in each of these two crucial instances he took such a decision that only a few in this world would be capable of taking such a decision under the given circumstances. In one of these two crucial cases, Ali (A.S.) had kept silent while in the other he revolted - A splendid silence and a more splendid revolt. The stance adopted by Ali (A.S.) in the case of his silence is the same, which we have explained.

In certain circumstances, silence and moderation requires more strength, power and possession of the 'self' than bloody uprisings. Imagine a person who was the symbol of bravery, courage and zeal, a person who had never shown his back to the enemy and the brave ones shivered due to fear from him. Condition and circumstances became such that politically-motivated people took advantage of the crucial situation and made things difficult for him such that when his most beloved wife was subject to results, she addressed her husband with such sentences that makes mountains move from their places. She (A.S.) said:

"O son of Abu Talib! Why have you crawled in one corner of the house? You are the same person whom, the brave ones could not sleep due to fear from you. Now you are exhibiting yourself as a weak one before the people. I wish I had died and not seen such a day."

Angered by the events, Ali (A.S.) is provoked as such on the side of his wile that holds him extremely dear. What power was it that could not move Ali (A.S.) from his place? After hearing the speech of Hazrat Zahra (A.S.), he consoles her and says: No, I have not changed. I am the same as before. Expediency lies in something else. He comforts her until Zahra (A.S.) is content and hears from her the sentence of:

« حسبي الله و نعم الوكيل»

Below Sermon No.215, Ibn Abil Hadeed has narrated this famous incident:

"One day Fatemah (A.S.) invited Ali (A.S.) to revolt. At that very moment the call of "Muezzin" could be heard saying:

اشهد ان محمداً رسول الله

Ali (A.S.) told Zahra (A.S.): "would you have this call to be extinguished? - She replied: 'No'. Ali (AS.) said: "Then my words are the same."

However the splendid revolt (limited to Ali (A.S.) himself) which he was proud of and about which he used to say that none had the courage to do what he did was the revolt against the Kharijites.

« فانا فقأت عين الفتنة و لم يكن ليجترأ عليها أحد غيري بعد ان ماج غيهبها و اشتد كلبها»

"So now 'O people, I have put out the eye of revolt No one except me advanced towards it when its gloom was swelling and its madness was intense."

The apparent piety of the Kharijites was such that ft would keep any binding believer in doubt. An atmosphere obscure and gloomy and a sphere full of doubt and hesitation had come into existence. They were all 12,000 in number and due to excessive prostration[1] their foreheads and knees had formed patches. They used to eat piously, wear piously and live piously. Their tongues were constantly in praise of God. However, they were unaware of the spirit of Islam and did not possess the Islamic penetration. They wanted to compensate all their shortcomings forcibly through genuflexion and prostration. They were narrow-minded, apparent - worshippers, ignorant, rigid and a big barrier in front of Islam.

As a matter of great honor, Ali (A.S.) says: "It was I who perceived the great danger brought about by these narrow-minded so-called religious people. Their indurated forehead, their baggage, their ascetic garb and their constant liturgical praise of God could not turn my eyes blind. It was I who realized that if ever they grew tough; they would so drive Islam towards conventionalism, petrifaction and outward show that the back of Islam would no longer be straightened.

Yes! Only the son of Abu Talib got the chance of this honor. Which powerful soul was existing, which would not receive a jolt in the face of those plausible personalities? And which power was existing, which could rise up to strike their head but not shiver?

THE END